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REVIEWS.

Seneca Fiction, Legends, and Myths. Collected by JEREMIAH CURTIN and J. N. B. HEWITT; edited by J. N. B. HEWITT (32d Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology). Washington, 1918.

THE present volume brings us at last the long-promised publication of the valuable folkloristic material collected by Jeremiah Curtin among the Seneca in 1883, 1886, 1887. To this is added another series of equally valuable tales collected by Mr. Hewitt in 1896. This extended material gives us the possibility of a fairly full insight into the mythology and fiction of the Iroquois, which, excepting Mr. Barbeau's contribution on the Wyandot, has been known heretofore from fragmentary accounts only, — accounts told in much Europeanized form. Even in the present series may be noticed the greater accuracy of rendition in Mr. Hewitt's tales as compared to those collected by Mr. Curtin, a difference due to Mr. Hewitt's intimate knowledge of the Iroquois language. It would exceed the scope of a review to discuss the rich contents of this volume, which will always remain the most important source-book for Iroquois folk-lore. We may note, in passing, the curious absence of brief animal tales, which are so characteristic of other parts of North America; and the prevalence of tales of giants, thunder, and similar beings, and of tales of shamanistic or other supernatural powers, recounted in a somewhat epical way as a series of exploits of heroes. Judging from published material, the absence of animal tales would seem to be due, not to selection on the part of the collectors, but to actual conditions; although it is hardly conceivable that in early times these tales, which are so widely spread over the American Continent, should have been entirely unknown. It would be interesting to learn whether, among children and women, these tales may not be current.

In the introduction to the volume, which deals with general theoretical aspects of mythology, Mr. Hewitt assumes the standpoint that corresponds to the views that were held a long time ago, when it was still believed that folk-thoughts were always pure and beautiful, and reflected a past better period. His position reminds us of the state of mind of that period of Romanticism that gave birth to the study of folk-lore, and which is so strongly reflected in the fairy-tales of the brothers Grimm, and in the subsequent studies of this subject. It did not become clear to these students that folk-thought has another side, — if you will, coarser, and reflecting the pleasures of every-day life. This fact was recognized only when romantic thought gave way to a matter-of-fact consideration of the data. When Mr. Hewitt throws aside all the apparently coarse material in Indian lore because he likes to deal with those men who represent the best thought of the American race, he unintentionally falsifies the picture, as was done by early European folk-lorists a hundred years ago. The obscene incidents of Western and Algonquin myths form part and parcel of mythology, the character of which would be entirely misrepresented if they were omitted.

The theoretical introduction, also, pays no attention whatever to the recent discussions of the origin and development of mythologies. It

rather follows the attempts to explain every myth as the outgrowth of the direct observation of natural phenomena, and the attempt is made to identify every group of mythological beings with certain forces of nature. The whole question, in how far the interpretations may be secondary attempts to re-interpret transmitted mythological legendary material, — either at the hands of the natives or at the hands of the student, — is not considered at all. From this point of view it must also be regretted that Mr. Hewitt does not accompany his series of tales with notes that would allow the student to compare the form and contents of Iroquois folk-lore with those of neighboring tribes. The task of a comparative study is left to a future student.

The general impression that we receive from reading Mr. Hewitt's present and former collections, and from the better-recorded tales published by other authors, is that the Iroquois have developed a strong individuality in the formation of the plots and in the literary treatment of their mythology. The contrast between an authentic series like the Ojibwa tales collected by William Jones and the material contained in the present volume is certainly very strong, and well worth a detailed study.

F. B.

RAFAEL KARSTEN, *Myths of the Ji'baros* (Boletín de la Sociedad Ecuatoriana de Estudios Históricos Americanos, 2: 325-339). 1919.

Dr. Rafael Karsten gives us here an interesting collection of myths of the Jíbaros (Shuará) of eastern Ecuador. The collection contains a variant of the ascent to heaven by means of an arrow-chain, which is so common on the northwest coast of America, but apparently unknown in the rest of North America and in Central America. Ehrenreich has called attention to its occurrence on the Amazonas and among the eastern Tupi ("Die Mythen und Legenden der südamerikanischen Urvölker" [Berlin, 1905; Supplement Ztschr. f. Ethn., 1905: 49, 76]). The beginning of this Jíbaro myth, which deals with the exploits of the twin culture-heroes, recalls the Guamachuco myth, according to which the twins originated from two eggs taken from their dying mother. — The story of the origin of fire also recalls North American types. The fire is taken by the humming-bird, who by deception gains access to the house of the owner of fire, and, when escaping, hides it in the bark of a tree. — The story of the origin of cultivated plants and other food-products through the magic words of a supernatural child is analogous to a legend of the eastern Tupi recorded by Thevet (see Ehrenreich, *l.c.*, p. 57).

F. B.